



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice

In Opposition to:

**H.B. No. 5061 (RAISED) An Act Eliminating Credit Reports
as a Basis for Employment Decisions**

*Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees
February 18, 2010*

The Division of Criminal Justice does not support Raised Bill No. 5061, *An Act Eliminating Credit Reports as a Basis for Employment Decisions*. The bill as currently written would apparently prevent the Division from using a critical tool for evaluating candidates for important positions of public trust. This would not only apply to applicants for prosecutorial positions but also to those individuals nominated by the Governor to serve as state commissioners, judges and in other positions of public trust and for whom background investigations are conducted by the Division of Criminal Justice.

The use of credit scores, credit account balances, payment histories, bank account balances and other credit information plays a critical role in ensuring that those who occupy positions of public trust are not susceptible to improper influence. Many of these officials not only exercise considerable authority over the lives of others, but they also routinely come into possession of sensitive personal information that must be kept confidential. A critical means of ensuring that those who occupy these positions will not be subjected to improper influence or pressures to breach the public trust is ensuring that their financial obligations are consistent with their resources. A candidate for any such position who is in significant financial distress might well be susceptible to compromising the public's trust to avoid financial peril.

Moreover, significant financial difficulties that are uncovered during a background investigation may signal other problems in the applicant's or nominee's background such as chemical dependency, gambling, or inappropriate relationships that again might be used to compromise the public official's integrity. Although the bill proposes to exempt certain types of employment from its restrictions, as currently drafted it does not appear to exempt Judicial, law enforcement, other criminal justice positions or commissioners and other agency heads now subject to background checks. For that reason, the Division of Criminal Justice opposes Raised Bill No. 5061 as now drafted. The Division stands ready to work with the Committee in any effort to revise the language to address these concerns and craft a bill that provides for reasonable exceptions to allow for the necessary examination of those recommended for positions of public trust.